

SUSAN SCHWALB Spatial Polyphonies

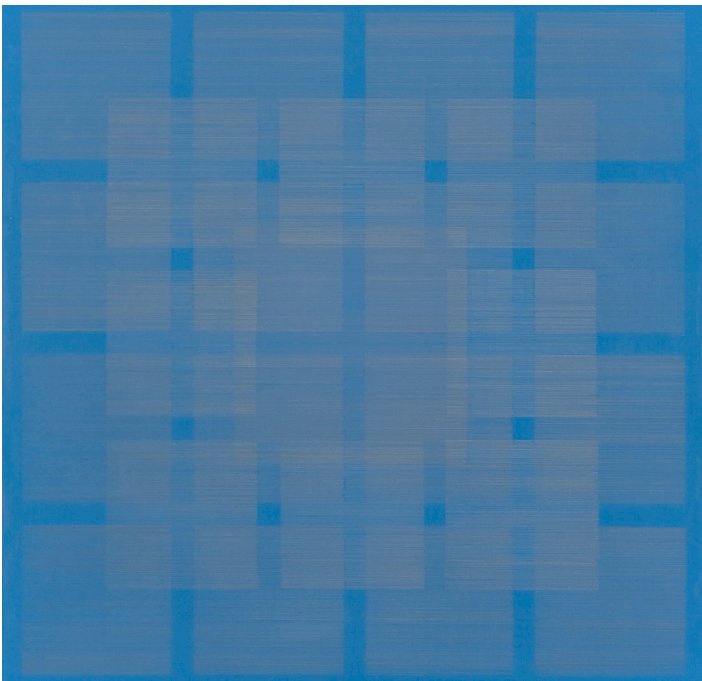
October 2 – November 2, 2013

Rhythm and interruption, repetition and difference, have been made to embrace. – John Yau 2013

Garvey | Simon is pleased to present **SUSAN SCHWALB: Spatial Polyphonies**, an exhibition highlighting Schwalb's newest explorations with mixed metalpoint drawing. This will be Schwalb's 10th solo show in New York and her first with Garvey | Simon Art Access. The opening reception will be held on Thursday, October 3, from 6-8pm; the artist will be present. A color catalog is available with an essay by John Yau.

Susan Schwalb is a contemporary virtuoso of silverpoint drawing, a Renaissance technique used by masters such as Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer, and a medium that naturally gives itself to linearity. A lost art to many, it is Schwalb's medium of choice for the last 35+ years. Schwalb reinvented the technique (which historically is best known for its delicate, figurative applications) by favoring the resolute abstraction and beauty that comes from the consideration of pure line. The contrasting hues of a variety of metals (not just silver - but gold, brass, aluminum, bronze, copper, pewter, tin) lain down in delicate horizontals against both brightly colored and neutral grounds produce subtle color variations that are the hallmark of her approach. Like most metal objects, the silver and other metals used in her works tarnish over time when exposed to air. This facet of her methodology reveals an evolutionary process, as Schwalb must wait for the passage of time to fully expose what her marks will divulge. John Yau thoughtfully dissects this notion of *time* in her work in the exhibition's catalog essay:

...Schwalb knows she cannot stop time, that she can only structure its passing. ...At the same time, Schwalb recognizes that no matter how much control she is able to exert on her work, both she and her art are material things vulnerable to time's vicissitudes. By folding this consciousness into her work, Schwalb is able to bestow upon it an emotional resonance that distinguishes her project from those we associate with Minimalism and reductive art. Her work is not static and makes no claim to being timeless. Rather, her work is about passage on many different levels, the myriad distinctions and differences that constantly reveal themselves in the face of constant change. Her work underscores her belief that nothing – including the seemingly simple act of drawing a line – is mundane, and that all activities are inextricable from time.



Polyphony VI, 2013, silver, gold, copperpoint, blue gesso on paper on wood, 16 x 16 inches.



Intermezzo III, 2013, silver, copper, goldpoint, colored pencil and gesso on panel, 6 x 6 x 1½ inches.

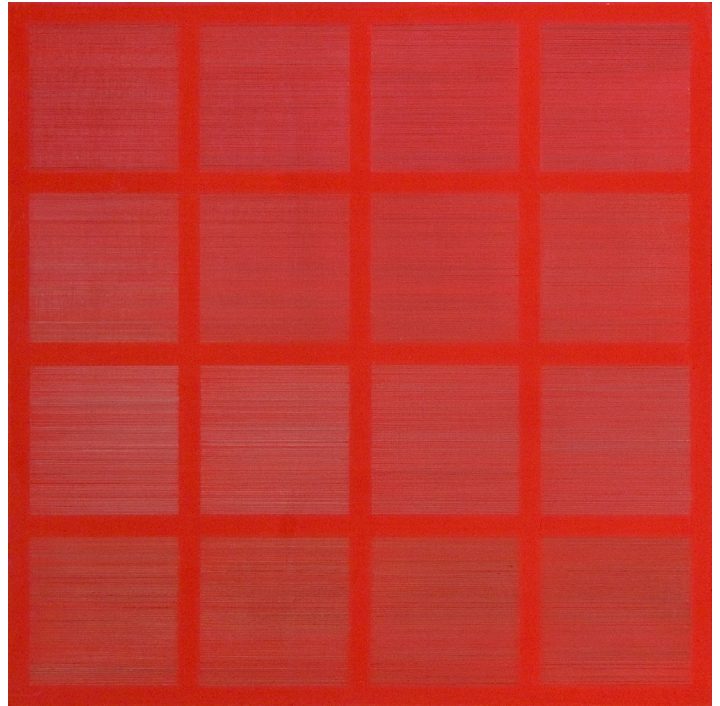
In addition to the various types of metal used, the artist also uses myriad metallic tools to create her tonal surfaces – a stylus for line, flat pieces of metal to achieve shimmering atmosphere, and even metal-wool pads to create unusual textures. Layering, line and light are the most important components of her meditative compositions.

In this new body of work, Schwalb pushes her explorations further to achieve a new vocabulary of mark-making and spatial environment. The creation of new, multilayered abstract shapes, visually arresting spatial illusions, and the inclusion of sparingly used diagonal lines mark this new body of work as an innovative departure for the artist. Examples of her newest pursuits include work composed on primary-colored, pure white and jet-black grounds, as well as three-dimensional drawings on six-inch panels. In some cases, she adds small, controlled applications of colored pencil or graphite to the metallic striations.

Many of Schwalb's titles are taken from musical terms (she is married to composer Martin Boykan), and several works in this show are entitled *Polyphony*, indicating simultaneous lines of independent melodies. In these works, layers of colored metals combine to create grids of interlocking squares, creating a mystical and ephemeral optical illusion when viewed from different angles.

A native New Yorker, Susan Schwalb was born in 1944. She received her BFA from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1965. Since then she has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally, including over 35 solo exhibitions. Her work can be found in major public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; The British Museum, London; The Brooklyn Museum, NY; Kupferstichkabinett - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England. Most recently, Schwalb's work is discussed and featured on the cover of the book, *The Luminous Trace: Drawing and Writing in Metalpoint*, by art historian, Thea Burns (2013).

Garvey | Simon Art Access is a hybrid art advisory and contemporary gallery. For the primary market, our special focus is works-on-paper, drawing, and media requiring great technical precision and control. Our art advisory service was founded in 1999 by Elizabeth K. Garvey and specializes in American, Modern, and Contemporary Art. We deal actively in the secondary market as well, assisting our collectors in the discreet de-accession of selected works.



Polyphony IV, 2013, silverpoint, red gesso on paper on wood, 16 x 16 inches.